

Mr. Avery W. Selkirk, Port Huron, Mich.

Interviewed by Wm. Wakeham and Richard Rathbun,

September 1, 1894.

*Sturgeon catch  
improved by  
introduction of  
P. Can. side*

Our sturgeon fishing improved this year over that of last year out of the pound nets on the Canadian shore. Our trout fishing is the principal fishery. I lay the sturgeon increase to the fact that pound nets have just been introduced there. This is the first year they have tried pound nets on that shore, and they did splendidly.

P  
J  
P

*Trout prin  
fishing*

This is a center for gill net fishing.

We are the only firm here this year that fish gill nets. Creig & Lang have been fishing gill nets out of here with a Canadian tug last year. They have a fresh fish house here and a salt fish house in Detroit. It is James Creig in Detroit and here it is

9

*Gill net center  
No. of firms.*

Craig & Lang. They have been relieved of their license this year, owing to the fact that some little thing came up between Mr. Lang and the Canadian Government, and they would not allow him his license this year. He lives on this side. That is the reason we are the only gill net people this year.

P. 100.  
Pound nets are fished in the southern part of the lake on the American side, but not in the river, and the same way on the Canadian side. About 2 miles from the river are the nearest pound nets. There are no pound nets anywhere in St. Clair River.

None in St. Clair R.  
Fishes  
They do not set hoop nets in St. Clair River that I know of.

Seines  
Seines are used on the American side of the river now, and they have been used on the Canadian side, but not now.

Hook.  
There is commercial hook and line fishing in the river wherever they can catch them.



*Sport*

There is a good deal of sport fishing, and they sell their fish also.

*History  
general*

This company has only been fishing this year, but the old Port Huron Fish Company have been fishing here 6 years. I have been here 6 years. This is an old fishing place. Mr. R. Holland fished here 20 years ago. He is now with the dredge people on Government work. He can give you more of the history than any other man in this country. He has been here for 40 years.

*T.  
Descrip*

Where we fish pound nets we run from 12 to 22 feet of water. We have about 3 nets only in a string. That is about as far as we can get out, as we strike the channel where they are dredging. Our leaders are 40 rods long each. We can come right up to the shore, but we go generally about 18 or 20 feet from the shore. Sometimes we begin out 50 feet from shore.

P.  
season

Storms.  
effect of

Our pound net season commences the 15th of April and ends up the 15th of July on this side, and then we pull out and mend up our nets and put them back in the first of September, and end up the 10th of December. We never pull out before December 10 here. What protects us is the current so that the ice does not form. I think we could hang on here until the first of January without any trouble. The storms do not bother us at all. We used to fish on the Canada side way up, but could not stay there in December on account of the ice forming and it would cut the twine off. They are not sheltered on the Canada side from the north-west winds. We get more north-west winds in the fall than from any other direction, and are sheltered from them. Up the shore 6 or 7 miles we would have to pull in about the middle of November in order to protect ourselves from

ice.

In the spring we catch No.1 pickerel and No.2 pickerel and some herring and a very few perch, and sturgeon fishing is our main fishing. We get more in value of sturgeon in one day than all the rest of the fishing put together for the season. In the fall the herring are the principal fishery. We get a September run here and then they come along pretty fair through October in small lots, and in November the fishing is pretty fair. They hang on up to the first of December. We get what we call the lake minnow here that would be caught in gill nets if we fished them. They run between a herring and whitefish and are like a menominee whitefish. They are called menominees up above. You can catch the menominees most any time out here, but not in pounds. We do not get any whitefish to speak of, or trout, in the

P.  
catch  
walleye  
herring  
sturgeon  
perch  
Seasons.

Menominee

M. f.  
trout

*T.  
bass.  
Esch*

pound nets. Get no black bass. Only caught one this year. Get no duck-bill pike, or grass pike. We designate them by that name from the wall-eyed pike. We call the latter wall-eyed pike here altogether.

*T.  
descrip*

Our pounds are small mesh pots for herring, 2 1/2-inch mesh is the smallest we use in the pots. The hearts are 5-inch and the leaders 6 and 7-inch. That is on the American side. We have no trouble with meshing the fish in the pot or leaders, unless it happens to be a few small herring. Fish lead about 4 feet from the leader; that is, they will not come within 4 feet of a leader, and they do not go through, no matter what the size of the leader.

*bass.*

There are no black bass here at all.

*wall-eye  
size  
fishes.*

Our yellow pickerel run like this: we designate them the No.1's and No.2's. We take them from a pound up for No.1's and smaller

*Walleye**(mesh)*

than that we take for No.2, but we do not get but very few out of our pound nets of No. 1. The pound nets will catch 1/2 pound pickerel easy and they will not gill. Anything smaller than that I think will go right through. We do not do much with the No.2 pickerel here. If we had our choice we would not have any fish in our house smaller than No.1, but if you stop the small pickerel you would have to stop the hookers from catching them, and the seines also. The hookers are the ones who catch the small pickerel mostly. The pickerel come to the current to spawn. I think they come into the river to spawn. I think the sandy bays on the Canada shore are more of spawning places for them than anywhere else. There is a strong current right up this Canada shore and my impression is they go up that shore to spawn. We get all of our pickerel

*Hookers take  
Small**Spawning**(current)*

*Walleye**season*

here; on the Canada shore we get the pickerel in the months of April and May, and it is about the same on the American shore. We

*close season*

have a close season up to May 15 and it should be up to April 15 in order that we

would not get the small fish. Our pickerel

*spawning time*

spawn the latter part of April, and the

close season is during the spawning season.

They leave as soon as they are through spawn-

*season**movements*

ing. In this end of the lake we do not get

any pickerel after the middle of May, unless

we get a heavy blow or something to drive

them in. We do not get them with gill nets

*(g)*

to amount to anything. My impression is

they go to deep water because we do catch a

few scattering pickerel out in the middle of

the lake. I think they scatter all over af-

ter spawning. They leave here about May 15

at the end of their spawning season. We get

a run of No.2 pickerel after that that come



Walleye  
movements  
Hooks.

into the river, and they scatter all through the river, and then the hookers commence to catch them, and then the large male pickerel come down in the river in July and August and I think they work up through Lake St. Clair. The little pickerel we get after the middle of May. We used to handle anywhere from 40 to 75 boats a day running all the way from 15 to 150 pounds each. They chugged and trolled principally. That is done all over the river. Night fishing is the time to catch them. They will commence that fishing about the middle of May and get a few then and the best fishing comes the latter part of June and through July. We get the large male pickerel first in the river ahead of the small ones. They are all male pickerel. I never opened a fish in my life with eggs in that was caught with a hook. The way that fish is built, he is a

*walleye*

good, plump fish, fat and round, but you press in on the belly and it is hard, instead of being soft as a female would be. A female pickerel is gaunt after they have spawned and the male pickerel are always fat. In the fall we get a very few pickerel, but do not get them abundantly. They do not hook them in the fall. The hook and line fishing is all through the summer up to now.

We get a smaller class of herring here than the Lake Erie herring. They are a little longer and gaunter than the Lake Erie herring. That is, they will run either very small or very large; there is no even size. In the spring we usually get very large herring weighing from  $3/4$  to 3 pounds. We have got herring here weighing 3 pounds. I remember one day I had 1,800 pounds of herring that came into this market, but they came in about the 1st or 2d week in September and I

*Herring  
kind.  
size  
abundance  
Season*

*Herring*

sold them to a large house in New York, and there was not a one of them that would run less than 1 pound. That run is very light and we perhaps catch 3,000 pounds of that class of herring; but go out and lift the next day and you will get all little herring. Of course, we do not get many weighing 3 pounds, but that 3 pound herring is a common herring with green back. We pick them out and sell them for whitefish a good deal. I think they are a different kind from the small ones. We do not have the long jaw here nor the blue fins. These large herring are caught in the pound nets and there will be but very few of them. We might possibly catch 1,000 or 1,500 pounds through the whole season. In the fall the herring begin to run some in September, and more in October, and the most in November, which is the best month. I think they spawn the latter

*Long jaw  
bluefin  
P.  
spawning*

*Herring*  
*Lake Erie*

part of November, about the same as the whitefish. On Lake Erie we have noticed we will get a run of herring and right on top of that run of herring will come the whitefish, and then will get another run of herring on top of that. And down there you will take out 100 tons a day from the nets in the fall, in November. I fished out of Put-in-Bay last fall. It will go along for 2 or 3 nights and you will not get anything and we think that the herring are gone, but all of a sudden you will get them heavier than ever.

*Pickrel*  
*walleye*  
*Maumee Bay*  
*abundant*

Now explain to me that pickerel deal last spring. Show me a spring for years and years that they ever caught so many pickerel as they caught in the Maumee Bay last spring.

*Whitefish*  
*decrease*

Whitefish I think have decreased more especially than other kinds, at least outside of Georgian Bay. Whitefish have decreased

W. J.

(9)

greatly in Lake Erie for the last 3 years. The gill nets catch them all off before they can get ashore. The gill nets are ruining the fishing in Lake Erie, as they follow the fish right up until they catch them off.

q.  
descrip.

The gill nets are deepening their twine for the herring and, instead of running 18 meshes, they run up to 30 meshes deep, but they cannot do that in Lake Huron. Our average herring will run about 1/2 pound. They are a little larger than the herring further north, and the further south you go the larger they run on an average. We get a good many small herring. We dump them back when we get down to a certain size. We will not sell anything less than 3/8 to 1/2 pound. We can tell about the size when sorting them. When we sell by the weight, we sell 100 pounds for, say, \$1.50, but when we sell by the count we count them out and we sell 75

Herring  
sizeThrow out  
Small

min. size

*Herring*

*abundance*

herring to equal \$1.50, and that would make 200 herring to 100 pounds. That is round. I do not think there is any difference in the abundance of herring, and it was better on this lake last fall than it ever has been before. I think there is a gain in the herring here, if anything.

*walleye abundance*

The pickerel are not as abundant. There is no difference in pickerel fishing here, for the reason that we are not in a pickerel country for pound nets on this side and the pickerel fishing on the Canadian shore we cannot see any difference. They are about alike every year.

*Sturgeon abundance*

On the Canadian shore we had better sturgeon fishing this year than last year and got them much earlier.

*Herring  
Ames. & how  
Thin  
Seines*

I have been speaking entirely of the American shore with regard to herring. The herring are taken with seines on the American



*Herring  
River  
movements  
season*

side in the river. The herring are coming up the river now from below. They are about 10 miles down the river now on the Canadian shore. I do not know where they come from. We do not get any great quantity of them in the spring.

*Perch  
L. St. Clair*

They get more perch fishing than anything else in Lake St. Clair.

*Herring,  
River  
abundance*

This body of herring which is coming up now is generally a large one, but the last 2 or 3 years it has not been so large. Our lake herring are an entirely different class from what we catch in the river. The herring that used to be caught in the seines

*Lake  
different class  
compared*

right across here are more like the Lake Erie herring; and the herring we get up the lake are herring that are coming down the lake because they get them at Sanilac first. The two bodies of herring are working right towards each other, but I do not think they

*movements*

*Herring*

mingle. The up river run are a larger run than the others and more like the Lake Erie herring. Up the Canadian shore they get more of a Lake Erie herring than we do on this side.

*market**amt. of catch*

We ship the most of our herring fresh for local trade through the State. We catch about 25 tons of herring out of 5 pound nets. You take it from Sanilac and, including this port, there are about 200 tons of herring caught. Sanilac caught more herring last

*amt. of apparatus**abundance**market**Sturgeon  
size**abundance*

year than ever before. They were not fishing any more apparatus than usual, but the run of herring was larger. They salt their herring.

We designate our sturgeon on this side 4 feet and up for marketable sturgeon. Less than 4 feet we take them, but call them halves, and it takes 2 for 1. The sturgeon catch on this side was very light this year

and did not amount to anything. The sturgeon have not been falling off on this side until this year and we lay it to the dredge right opposite our nets which destroy them. As a general thing we get as many as we did 6 years ago. Year before last was the best season for them we have had before the dredge came, which shows that it is the dredging which destroys them. We get our sturgeon when we get a north-east wind and roily water, but I think they come right straight across from the Canada shore. We get them in June in abundance, but get a few in May and a few in July, and a very few in the fall. I never have heard of there being any better sturgeon fishing than we had 3 years ago. I have made about 60 kegs of caviar this year. I can get the eggs for caviar any time after they commence to run in the spring, but June, of course, is the

Sturgeon  
abundance

dredging)

Movement

Season

abundance

Caviar

main caviar month. We do not get much caviar from the fall sturgeon, but if we catch them in abundance we would probably have about as much caviar, but not as much as in the spring. About the sorting of the caviar, it is a good deal of a speculation. They will sort out a man who is not acquainted with the business very well. This year it was said by Neilson that we had the best eggs they ever had. In the lake the sturgeon are taken entirely with pound nets. Our sturgeon will average about 25 pounds each. There is a place where we could catch sturgeon if we could only make the nets stand, and that is up at Grindstone City, but it is so rocky you could not make the nets stand there.

We get a very few perch in the pound nets, but the pickerel, herring and sturgeon are the principal fish.

*Sturgeon*

*P. in Lake*

*Size*

*Grindstone City*

*chief catch  
walleye  
herring  
sturgeon  
perch*

There is but one seine down in the river belonging to Craig & Lang, until you get way down the river near Algonac. That is the only seine that has been used since I have been here. That is right opposite the Grand Trunk depot, about a mile north of here. I think there are only 2 or 3 seines fished around Algonac. The season for seines is the same as our pound netting. They will commence and haul occasionally along about the middle of this month, but will not follow it steadily until about the first or 10th of October. In the seines they take herring, pickerel and quite a good many mullet and sturgeon, that is all. They catch them in the spring, and also in the fall. They run about the same class of fish as they get in the pound nets. They catch a good many sturgeon with the seine. They always fish the same ground. They have this

Seine  
No. River  
Loc.

Season

Catch  
herring  
walleye  
mullet  
sturgeon

Season  
Same as in  
P.

Grounds

*Seine.*

ground cleared and they cannot change very well. They take about the same size fish as the pound nets.

*Same size fish as P.*

*Fykes.*

There are no fyke nets used here.

*Seine Canada side history now prohibited*

On the Canada side seines have been used before, and quite extensively. But they are entirely prohibited there now, beginning this spring. They were used last fall. The seining there would be the same as here, but they are a better grade of fish on that side. They get that up run of herring and they are a better class of herring entirely.

*Method better grade fish*

*Herring.*

We have no little creeks running into the lake here for fyke nets.

*Fykes.*

The commercial hook and line fishing is simply pickerel fishing. There is no sport fishing here. They fish for pickerel. Up Black River they get considerable black bass with hooks and lines.

*Hooks, walleye sport*

*res. Black R.*

*Spearing*

They do no spearing here at all.



*Explosives*

Explosives are never used for fishing, but they use them sometimes for wrecking vessels, and it affects the fish. It kills the fish and stuns them both. They will come to the surface and float on the top wherever the explosives are used. I do not know as it hurts the fishing particularly, but it kills a good many fish. I think, however, that fish off a little distance, it simply stuns them.

*offal*

We bring all our offal ashore and take it into the country and bury it. You take it outside 20 or 30 miles from shore and the offal would not affect us as it would all sink. It affects fishing all right enough, and that is why we do not do it. I do not think it would drive the fish from the grounds. We occasionally throw a pailful overboard, but if we have a barrel we bring it in and pay a dollar for having it carted

away.

*Sewage*  
There is a good deal of sewage in the river. I have no use for any water that is taken below Port Huron. I think if there is any chance for microbes to grow, they will grow there.

*Sawmill*  
We have one saw-mill, but have no trouble from it.

*dredging*  
The dredges draw the stuff right alongside of us and dump it right along our nets. They could dump it somewhere else just as well as not. I have even visited General Poe personally to see if it could not be stopped. They are dredging out here, and they come right between the pound nets and dump, when they might just as well run off a couple of miles in deep water and dump it. The Government is destroying the entire fishing on this shore. If you come in here continually for 2 or 3 years with large scow loads of

*dredging*

dirt you are really making a channel bank and that acts the same as a wall and fish come here and lead away, and you will destroy the pound net grounds entirely here because fish seek the current, we will not get them, and it will destroy the fishing entirely. We are fishing in a particular place which is especially good and has always been so, and if we change our nets we would not get any fish. We have always claimed that the fish go to the Canada shore to spawn. We do not get but a very few pickerel in the spring, and, in fact, sturgeon are the only thing we fish for; and in the fall herring are the only thing we fish for, with pound nets. The dumping should be stopped right now. There is no mistake that it has cost me hundreds of dollars. I may say this one thing for the dredging: it might not materially affect us in a year after the dredging

*Fish spawn  
on Can. shore*

is done, because the heavy seas might level it off, but while they are at work it makes the water muddy and it drives the fish away, and they are working night and day. We can prove that the dumping has hurt us by our books. Up to last year our fishing was always of an even nature, but they commenced dredging last spring and commenced dumping right along-side of us, and while we do not think the dredging in the long run is going to hurt us, but if they would run one mile north of us or half a mile north of us and get away from the pound net grounds, it would not hurt us, but they will come within 20 or 25 feet of us and dump and if they should happen to pull up a rock and throw it in it would go right through our nets. They could just as well go into deep water, and it only saves the dredge men a little coal to run off farther and dump it, and the

Government is paying these men, and it is only saving them a little expense. I would do anything in the world to stop the dredging if it could be done. I went to General Poe and stated my grievances and he said he would write to these people, but I never saw any results from it at all. I think as long as the dredging people are paid for dredging and taking the stuff away they might as well take it half a mile away and protect our grounds. We always accommodate those people whenever we can and try to encourage them to go away from us, but they come right on us harder than ever.

*P.  
loc.  
descrip*

The location of the pounds of the Huron Fish Company in Lake Huron are on the American side just abreast of the U.S. Light Ship above the head of the River St. Clair. I have only 2 strings, 3 in one string and 2 in the other. Craig & Lang have strings

*dredging*

south of us and there are more north of us  
about 4 or 5 miles. They could put the  
dredgings between us just as well as not if  
they were a mind to. They are dredging be-  
tween us and the Light House and they could  
take the stuff out on the other side where  
there is 6 or 8 fathoms of water.

*U.S. make  
laws*

The State does not pay any attention to  
it any more than the Government. If you  
want to do anything with fishing you have  
got to go to the Government instead of the  
State. The waters are navigable streams and  
the moment you strike into water deep enough  
for ordinary vessels to pass you are under  
the laws of the United States, and if that  
is the case, why should the land owners have  
anything to say outside of that? Those sand  
suckers and such shore boats are continually  
running through our nets, and if it is the  
case that we have to put our nets out at our

*P.  
navigation*



own risk from Government traffic, why should not the Government control the stream from the shore out? And yet we pay a man down here \$4,100 a year for the privilege of fishing off his land.

I am not in favor of so high a license as they have on the Canadian side and only allowing them to set a net one mile apart and no double headers.

The Canadian Government has passed laws prohibiting seine fishing down this shore and our river is less than a mile in width; now at the same time they have cut off these Canadians from fishing, and just across the river they can fish seines wherever they can make it practicable, simply to pick up what the Canadians have thrown away. Hitchcock and Stead have been operating seines up here for years and years, and another man had seines in right close along-side of them,

P.  
Riparian  
rights

Seines

P.  
Setting  
distance apart

Seines.  
Prohibited on  
Canada.  
Still used  
on Amer.

History

Seines

and they are allowed to fish there and Hitchcock & Stead are not.

I think the seine fishery is a harmful one and for this reason: in the first place, seines are operated with a small mesh, usually smaller than we use in pound nets. When they order a mesh from the factory they will order exactly 2 1/2-inch and by the time that is in the water it has shrunken down, because they are a class of nets that will not tar and do not hold. When we order a mesh, after it is tarred it stays right there at the same size. If the seine is operated at the time the fish are spawning, how can it help but destroy the spawn if it is pulled over the spawn just as the fish have deposited it. Pickerel and sturgeon both spawn where they seine. They also get lots of herring in the seine. If it is practicable to run their seines late enough,

Seines,  
harmful  
mesh

Used on  
Spawning  
grounds

walleye  
sturgeon  
herring

*Seines.*

they will catch the herring when they are spawning, and I cannot see why seines should be allowed on the river. I think it has been a good thing to shut off the seine fishing and protect the small fish. Canada prohibits seining on the river or lake.

*Stop Seining*

*Protect small fish.*

*Prohibited by Canada.*

(Except at the mouth of the Thames River, where it is allowed except during the spawning season--Dr. Wakeham).

*Business.*

We have been purchasers of fish, as well as catchers, and that was our main business when we came here. In purchasing these fish we find by looking back over our books that we caught more small fish through the seines and lost more money through the seines than any other class of fish we get.

*Seines take more small fish than any other apparatus*

*G.  
descrip.  
history*

*Loc.*

We use 4 5/8-inch mesh, which is the smallest we have in the gill nets. Gill netting was carried on here years before my time. At the present time 20 miles is the

q.

nearest we are gill netting. At the present time we are running 30 miles, abreast of Port Sanilac. We do not have as good fishing within 30 miles as we do farther north.

season

During the months of July and August is the only time we can get any profitable fishing in this end of the lake. They work down

front  
habits

here among the grass; we find the trout work down here among the moss, and if there is a little wind the water is not deep enough for them and they work back into deeper water.

loc.

In the fall we start from Port Huron and run way off to the big reef, the Saginaw Bay big reef. We set our nets on the edge of the big reef in 30 fathoms. We fish all the way from 30 miles off Sanilac to the big reef

boats  
tugs

off Saginaw Bay. We use sail boats and tugs both for the gill netting. We use only 1 tug. There are 2 tugs in the pool, however, Dubey and ourselves. We have only 1 sail

q.

boat. We are the only ones who are running gill net boats from here. One of the tugs is at Sand Beach. One is owned by J.B. Dubey & Sons and the other by myself. There is only 1 sail boat, and 2 tugs fishing between here and Sand Beach.

quantity

We fish 10,000 feet to each gang of nets and we have 3 gangs and each net is 273 feet long. There are 36 nets to each gang. We have 3 gangs in the water and one out. We leave them out 3 nights. In the fall we use only 2 gangs. In the spring we use 6 gangs. Our sail boat fishes 3 gangs, just the same as the tug, only they are smaller gangs, only 20 nets in a gang.

line out

no herring q.

We do not use small herring gill nets in this lake, but I used them on Lake Erie last fall. We have tried the herring gill nets, but it is not practicable in any way.

q.

descrip.

Our nets are 16 meshes deep. Those nets

q.  
can  
life

do not shrink. We use Scotch and Irish twine. We tan them every 3 weeks and in the fall every 4 weeks. My nets have been running ever since last spring and I have only lost one net this year. In this lake the twine will last longer than it will in Lake Erie.

method

We set the gill nets simply with reference to the depth of water and in the way we think the fish are running, until we get to the Canadian line, and then we have to shift. We sometimes set them running off the shore almost zigzag and sometimes straight. We often set in a circle around a reef. Set just to keep in a certain depth of water. We fish the gill nets all the season from the time the ice leaves until it closes us up.

season

Catch  
low  
trout

Up at the big reef we get nothing but trout, and down here we get about 100 pounds

*q. catch  
w. f.  
whitefish  
loc.  
season*

of whitefish to a ton of trout and about 100 pounds of pickerel to a ton of trout. The whitefish and pickerel begin in July. The early fishing is done in the north part up off Saginaw Bay and Sand Beach, and in the summer we run down into the shallow water at the southward. We get our trout down there just the same. We find it more profitable as the season decreases through July and August; we find it less expensive to fish nearer home. All our whitefish are obtained in the southern part of the lake and we do not get any up off the big reef. Our trout run <sup>(in fells)</sup> from 2 to 5 pounds. Occasionally we will get one less than 2 pounds, but hardly ever. In fact, our meshes will not catch a trout much smaller than 2 pounds. I think the trout, up to last fall, have been on the increase, but this spring it was on the decrease, owing to the fact that we had so

*Trout  
size  
(much)*

*abundance*



many winds and could not get out to our nets. That is, our catch was less, but the fishing was just as good. In July and August this year our average catch has been 600 pounds daily, and that is more of an average than was ever known before for one tug. We can get as high as 50 fathoms of water trout fishing. We do not get any siskiwit here, and I am glad we do not get them as they are too fat for us.

The whitefish run very large. It is a hard matter to find a whitefish that will run less than 4 or 5 pounds and the average is 7 or 8 pounds, and they will run up to 10 and 15 pounds. They are a good deal like the large Lake Superior whitefish. We get the whitefish through July, August, September, October and November. If we were making a special fishing for whitefish, and barring we do not get any gales of wind, we

*Trout depth*

*Siskiwit*

*W.F. size*

*Kind.*

*Season*

would get more whitefish in October. We get them right out here abreast of Sanilac.

They seem to travel north late in the fall.

Whitefish are more profitable than any other class of fish, but we do not make it a specialty because we know we cannot get enough of them. Another trouble with the whitefish

at this end of the lake, they are so large we cannot sell them for family use. Those fish seem to follow right in north and south

of Goderich in shallow water both fall and spring. The best season there around Goderich used to be in the fall, but for the last 15 years the best season is in the spring.

I think the reason of it is we are catching more herring down at this end of the lake now and where the herring are abundant you will not find whitefish. Herring and whitefish do not run together.

No other tugs but ours are fishing as far

exp.  
loc.  
movements  
abundance

size  
movements  
season

Herring &  
w.f.  
association

exp.  
tugs  
loc.

q.

storms

Current

north as Saginaw Bay reef. Our tug is 65 feet long and 15 feet beam. We are troubled by storms worse than they are farther north, as the water is shallow and it brings up more dirt and tears our nets more. This current reaches out here for 15 miles into the lake. Davis brought one of his tugs down here one fall since I have been here, but that is all the tugs that have been here besides ours.

P.  
not profitable

Pound nets are not profitable. The only way we can make any money out of it is for us to get the first price from them. If we ship to the dealers we would not get near as much for them. The fishermen are all under contract.

q.  
How set

We always set our gill nets on the bottom and never try setting them on the top, and would not catch anything if we did. The trout come up to feed on bugs in the summer,

Front  
habits

but it only takes a little ripple to drive them down, and especially in the night, they go to the bottom any way, and our nets fish the best in the night. I think if we could run a drag seine in deep water that there are times when we could catch a good many trout.

*q. fish best at night*

*P. descrip*

We were talking of using wire leaders this spring, and I do not know why it would not be practicable. I think it would be cheaper than twine in the end. We use coal tar, but we have tried the new Milwaukee tar, but we did not like it. It has not the substance to it. I think the stiffness that the tar gives the nets is what makes it durable.

*q. walleye size (mesh)*

*hollyer*

The pickerel we take in the gill nets are all very large. We never catch anything small because the meshes are too large. In fact, with our gill nets, it would be a very

hard matter to catch a fish that would weigh less than 1 1/2 pounds. We never take any <sup>Herring</sup> herring in the gill nets, nor perch or cat-<sup>fish</sup> fish. Occasionally we get a sturgeon in the gill nets, and would get them in deep water, and that is why I think the sturgeon go to deep water, but I think they are a fish that stays above the top of our nets as a rule, and that is why we do not get many of them. It might be that, if we set a 11-inch mesh, we might get them. We get quite a good many sheephead in the pound nets, but none in the gill nets. Practically, we do not get anything but trout. The only waste fish we get is when we cannot get out to our nets and fish die and rot; but that does not happen often. We probably get 10 or 15 pounds a day that we have to salt. In dressing them they are a little too soft to dress good, so that, when the knife goes through,

q.

catch

No herring

No perch

No cat.

Sturgeon  
habits

Sheephead

chiefly rot

Cond. of fish

9

it lets the bones out and we cannot ship the fish with the bones sticking out and the salt hardens them up.

trout spawning

I have never noticed spawning trout in the gill nets. They spawn on the Saginaw reef and our fishermen could tell you better than we can about that because the fish are all dressed on the tug. Joseph Banker is the captain of our tug.

4 5/8 inch mesh  
destruction  
size  
4 mesh

Mr. Whittaker took the ground that the fishermen were destroying the catch of whitefish, not taking into consideration that our nets are 4 5/8-inch mesh and that we could not possibly take a little whitefish that was just hatched. He had an application for \$55,000 for carrying on the work of the hatcheries and at the same time he was trying to place a close season upon us in the month of November to protect whitefish and trout. I am not a whitefish man, but a

J. gen

Protection & hatcheries both w. f. and trout.  
Why protect trout if so predaceous.

trout man. But he wanted protection on whitefish and trout; he did not say on whitefish and then on trout. At the same time they hatch these whitefish and at the same time he was taking the position that the trout were a very voracious fish and would eat up anything, old boots, snakes, etc., and so they will, and will multiply 10 times faster than any other kind we have. Now tell me why he wanted to protect trout and increase them and also whitefish, and at the same time want an appropriation to keep up the trout supply to eat up the young whitefish. My opinion is that they never can do the lakes any good by hatching whitefish as long as trout are swimming in these waters. It used to be years ago that the whitefish were more abundant than the trout, and my opinion is that the trout and whitefish in the lake are antagonistic, and the trout eat

Trout  
food



up the small fry and do not give the little whitefish a chance to grow. Right where they throw the eggs over at Sand Beach we get the very best fishing, and they are simply feeding grounds for trout, and that is the time the trout will swim high, just after they have dumped this whitefish spawn over. The trout make this particular place their feeding ground just after the whitefish are planted, and wherever you have planted those fish you will find the best trout fishing in the world. You have got to plant more whitefish if you want to do any good, and you have got to catch the trout out in order to let them grow.

I have heard old fishermen say that this used to be a great place for whitefish on the Canadian shore--Mr. Dubey.

I think if you would plant your whitefish right down around at the foot of the lake

W. J.  
L. C.  
abund.

where fry  
should be  
planted.

here it would be better than planting them up further. You probably have noticed in your travels that you will find more whitefish that are caught in pound nets, for they seek shallow water at certain times, and why would they not seek shallow water here as well as anywhere else? Two years ago we had our pound nets situated as they are now and we caught about 3 tons of little whitefish from 8 to 12 inches long, and we have not caught a one from that time to this. This was in the month of May and June. There was about 5 years ago a planting made out here, and now eventually we have gotten a good many of those fish. I have never seen any little whitefish 3 or 4 inches long. I think the little whitefish go to the deeper waters of the lake. I think it would be a good plan to let the little fry through a tube into the bottom of the lake into deep

*W. J.**hubb**PJ**Small**planting**young  
loc.*

W.F.

water, if it can be done without killing them. Of course, my theory was that as we caught them in shallow water, it would be a good place to plant them.

Prohibit taking  
No. 3,

This catching No.3 whitefish should be stopped.

Why stop  
catching  
trout

I cannot solve the question of why they want us to quit catching trout when they eat the whitefish up.

Fishermen  
returning  
spawn

I think a law that would oblige the fish-ermen to fertilize the spawn and put it back in the water was a good thing, but I think it would be better to have a Government man go along and do it. The trouble is when they are at work, and we hire a lot of fish-ermen by the month, and they are the greatest kickers you ever saw and do not like to even throw a chunk of coal overboard or do anything that is not exactly in their line. It would be better for our Government if

Ray

such a law was established to serve that law directly upon the fishermen who are to work for us. The fishermen would never take the trouble to deposit the spawn and take care of it according as our bill stipulated. It is a good idea but the fishermen would never carry it out. I think the only way to do would be to appoint men for that purpose. While we would be very glad to furnish every advantage for a man to go and do this work, and would do anything in the world to help him, but when you come to depend upon a raw-boned fisherman to do that, it is pretty poor dependence.

*bottom*

The bottom here is some sandy bottom and some moss bottom. The moss bottom is down about 12 or 15 fathoms.

*bark*

*logs.*

We have very little trouble with the bark in the gill nets. We get some logs in the bottom of the lake, but not much bark. The

rafting we get comes in very close to the American shore, between Saginaw and the head of St. Clair River, and does not pass over the gill net grounds. When we are fishing inside we get some bark, but have never had much loss from it. We have had some nets just filled up with the bark. There is another thing that this Government should take hold of by all means, and that is this rafting business. They should do something to do away with the bark in order to protect the fishing. The bark that comes out in these waters causes more damage to the fishing, and the sawdust that comes from these mills, than anything else in the world. These big mills up north of here drawing off scow load after scow load of sawdust into the lake will work an untold amount of injury. I think they should be compelled to take the bark off the logs before they raft

*Sawdust*

then and burn it. We have had whole gangs of nets filled up with that bark. If the Government is going to the expense of protecting the fishing and at the same time wants to protect laboring men, why do they not pass a law to take the bark off their logs and dispose of it in some way? In doing big contract work and filling up swamps I should think they could find places enough to use up that bark. There will be a time when it will be utilized as wood. And what is the matter of grinding up that bark and pressing it into wood to sell as fire-wood? This rafting is all controlled by half a dozen men.

Canada has got what seems to be to a good many people very stringent laws and to others their laws do not seem so stringent.

Now my opinion is this: that it could be regulated up on both sides. I think we ought

*Regulation  
General  
discussion*

to have a little protection on this side just as well as on the other side. I am going to tell you right here that I am just as much in favor of getting the fishing business into such a shape on this side so that monopolies cannot govern it entirely. Canada has got it there and a man can only own one license in Canada, and right here, if I have a hundred thousand dollars, I can drive all my neighbors right out, and if I had my own way I would place licenses on nets on this side just the same as they have it over there, and I would have the license probably \$25, instead of \$50, and I would not allow over 3 nets in a string, and for this reason: that with 3 nets you can reach 28 feet of water here, and it depends upon the season whether you can get the fish inside of that. It takes lots of wind to get the fish inside of that. If the two Governments would get

*License*

*Length of string*

*Uniform regulations*



their heads together and make their laws exactly alike, no matter what they may be, and fix them so that the small man can live as well as a rich man, and allow us to go within sight-seeing of their shore and allow them to come within sightseeing of our shore; I do not know why it would not be a good thing. My idea of a license is to know the number of pound nets that are fished and would regulate the gill nets just the same. I do not believe in confining a tug down to such a small quantity of netting that she cannot make it profitable. I believe in letting that tug run as many nets as she can conveniently run, and at the same time not cover the entire lake. I do not know as I would want to restrict any number of tugs because there is water enough to accommodate any number of tugs that want to go in there. But still it is a fact that they have the

Fish near  
certain shore

Regulate No.  
P.  
G.

No. tugs

thing overdone in Lake Erie. But if you make a law you have got to allow every citizen to enjoy the same privilege that any other man has. Now I might want to go into this and make a little money and there might be 40 people come right along and want to go in also and it would be a hard matter for the Government to tell them they could not and still let me go on. You can limit the number of nets that a firm can fish and limit the amount of twine that each tug can fish. The way we are situated here we are perfectly protected on tug fishing. This is the only harbor that more than 2 tugs can run from on Lake Huron on the American side. Oscoda has room for only one.

I do not think the decrease of the fish is due to the fact that the waters have been overfished on this lake, especially on the American shore. In Lake Erie it is a small-

*All citizens  
should have  
same privileges*

*Limit no.  
nets*

*tugs*

*Fish  
decrease  
cause*

*Lake Erie*

*A. J. G. M.*

er lake and the water is more shallow and,  
as I have said before, they can fish nets  
from the bottom to the top, but they can nev-  
er do that on these upper lakes, and we can  
never fish these upper lakes out as long as  
we live. Why should not the decrease of  
fish be attributable to some sort of epidem-  
ic such as goes through the human race and  
sweeps them off at times? The reason we  
keep up here better than the other lakes is  
because we have not the number of harbors  
and there are not the places for tugs to  
fish from.

I am considerably the same opinion with  
you, that fishing is going to diminish in  
time if we are allowed to run these large  
tug rigs. There is no question but what the  
excessive use of gill nets is going to de-  
plete the fishing; and there is no question  
but what these large tugs that can run 6

*L. Huron &  
upper lakes  
can never be  
fished out*

*Epidemic etc.*

*not chances  
for many  
tugs in  
L. Huron*

*Decrease of  
fish,  
possible  
with  
excessive  
fishing  
g.  
tugs*

*nigs*

gangs of 50 nets, which means nearly 8 miles of nets to a gang; I consider that too much and I consider that there should be a restriction. I have run 46 miles to a tug and

*smaller rig,  
more profitable*

I have found they can make more money by running less nets and less men on my tugs. But

*boats*

to do this we have got to come back to the old style of fishing with sail boats. But we are going to put a little bit of motor in

our boats to save time. But the minute we get back to the small boats we are running

less nets. A boat is a boat, and if they are restricted to a certain number of boats

they can only operate a certain number. It is going to drive us to the disuse of tugs

and to running small boats. It costs us

*less  
cost*

about \$7.00 a day to feed our little tugs

*boats*

with coal, and with that I can run my crew,

fuel, nets and all, with a little boat and a

motor. The moment we do get to this let the

*Limit no. boats*

Government step in and limit us to a certain number of those boats and not let us have 15 or 20 of them, but put us down to a couple apiece, which is all any one man should have. I have figured that it is cheaper for us to run 36 nets in a gang and only 4 gangs and one gang ashore than it is to run 6 gangs with 55 nets in a gang, and if all the tugs on this lake would confine themselves to 36 nets in a gang the fishing would last much longer. We haul our nets entirely by hand. I am not fully in favor of a close season, but I am in favor of cutting down the nets and boat rigs instead of a close season, and I think it will do just as well. You will never see any small white-fish caught in the gill nets.

*Smaller rig cheaper*

*Causeless decrease*

*4 method*

*close season*

*Small w/f*

*Hatcheries*

*Blue pike*

(The hatcheries are certainly a success down on Lake Erie--Dubey).

We do not get the blue pickerel up here.

*Sauger**Og.  
mesh*

Only get once in awhile a sauger. I am sure they are saugers. I use 4 5/8-inch mesh gill net, for the reason to help protect the fishing, and perhaps as a matter of habit.

I am in favor of 4 5/8-inch, and in fall fishing I would be in favor of a larger mesh.

*mesh & fish*

In our fishing here we never get a fish less than 1 1/2 or 2 pounds, and generally not less than 2 pounds. We are in the market selling and if we get a fish too small there is a good deal of fault found, and we took that measure to get the fish more of a uniform size. I would like to see the law establish the mesh at 5 inches.

*Trout  
w/ff  
min. size*

A trout less than 1 1/2 pounds dressed *Figen* should not be marketed, and whitefish not less than 1 pound dressed. It is a hard matter to get a whitefish in the lake of less size than 1 or 1 1/2 pounds and bring it in and not have it soft. If we can get them

*Walleye.  
min size*

*perch*

from 1 1/2 pounds up, they come in in excellent shape. Pickerel should not be caught less than 1 pound. We do not take enough perch to amount to anything. I should say nothing but lake perch should go in the market. A small size lake perch will run from 1/4 pound up to 1 pound. But these little Saginaw River perch it takes about 16 of them for a pound. The Saginaw River pickerel run better in the winter than they do in the spring and summer. They will run, I should judge, about 4 to a pound. They are taking them entirely too small either for profit or for the good of the fishing. A fish less than 8 inches in length should be put back in the river, especially where it is not fully developed.

*Walleye  
Saginaw R.*

*Sturgeon  
min. size*

We have a limit here on sturgeon. I think a sturgeon less than 4 feet should never be used. Give those sturgeon a chance



*Sturgeon  
spawning*

to grow. We see the sturgeon here with the spawn running, but it is not a large fish. We cannot use those for caviar. Would find them the latter part of June, and the first of July. They spawn anywhere along the shores of the lake and in the river also. They will spawn anywhere. Sturgeon will spawn while running. Males and females run together. Sturgeon will turn right around and eat up their own spawn. We find it inside of them while dressing them.

*Suckers*

We do not get many suckers here.

*P.  
American  
mesh  
herring*

There are no large mesh pound nets used on the American shore here. They are all 2 1/2-inch mesh, and that is plenty large enough for the herring. I do not think *Herring* there is anything to do with the herring. You have got to prohibit herring fishing entirely in this country if you want to do away with catching small herring. The only

*herring  
throwing back*

way to do is to throw back the small ones. They can throw them back all right. I should say herring that will run 300 to 100 pounds should be thrown back, and the herring that will run 200 to 100 pounds are all right. That is nearly an average size herring. We throw them back of our own accord, for they will not market.

*sof.  
abundant*

They caught a few whitefish on the Canada shore this spring, and we do not know what they will do in the fall, but we do not look for any whitefish then. You can turn the small whitefish out of the pound net without injuring them. The way we do, we generally have a scoop net and scoop them right out into the water.

*Throwing out*

I would like to see both pound netting and gill netting regulated on both sides so that we are just the same as the Canada laws and their laws are the same as ours, and

*P. Q.  
Should have  
uniform laws  
both sides*

*Reg*

each country allow each other's tugs to fish back and forth within sight of their shores so that we would not either of us be subject to seizure. I do not mean to say that we should allow our tugs to go over into Canadian ports and make their headquarters there, but fish just the same as though it were beyond seas.

*Seines  
Should stop  
destructive*

I would like to see the seine fishing *a.g.m.* stopped on the St. Clair River also as long as they have stopped it on the Canadian side. The reason is that the seines take too many small fish and they kill too many fish. On the Canadian shore, if they are allowed to haul a seine after the month of May, there is a class of small pickerel come down here, about No. 4, and if they are allowed to haul the seine they would catch any amount of those small pickerel. They are close in shore so that the pound nets will not catch

then. The deeper the water, the larger the fish we get. And that is what gets me that the Canadian people will only allow one net in a string. They should compel them to go out farther.

P.  
String  
can size

148